

FROM HUGH TO HUGH, OR SAINT TO SAINT:
ENSHRINING MEDIEVAL JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS IN THE
SPACE AND TEXTS OF LINCOLN AND ITS CATHEDRAL

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*I have always held and am prepared against all evidence
to maintain that the Cathedral of Lincoln is out and out the
most precious piece of architecture in the British Isles and
roughly speaking worth any two other cathedrals we have.*

—John Ruskin¹

When initially constructed in 1092, Lincoln Cathedral was a much smaller edifice than the imposing structure modern tourists experience.² Originally built in the Romanesque style but destroyed by an earthquake in 1185, the cathedral underwent major renovations and reconstruction under Hugh of Avalon, bishop of Lincoln between 1186 and 1200. Hugh's plans and efforts, continued after his death and elaborated upon by the inclusion of a choir to hold his shrine, resulted in the Gothic structure towering over Lincoln today. As one of the last major elements of the floor plan to be completed, the Angel Choir, constructed to hold the remains of Hugh, now sainted, was not finished until 1280, almost a hundred years after the bishop began repairs in 1192 (Baily 1; *Lincoln Cathedral from 1072*). The years over which the cathedral was reconstructed saw an influx of Jewish immigrants and refugees into England, and, in settlements like Lincoln and Norwich, conflict was particularly intense (Miyazaki 31). The thirteenth century, as a whole, was a dark time for Jewish-Christian relations in England, witnessing the anti-Jewish canons established at the Church Council in Oxford in 1222, the Statute of Jewry requiring Jews to identify themselves with badges in the shape of the tablets of the Ten Commandments in 1253, and an increase in rumors and aspersions of blood libel. During the reign of King Edward I, his mother, Eleanor of Provence, and wife, Eleanor of Castile, both profited from and abused their Jewish subjects, and he himself decreed the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 (Mundill 268). Due to the large population of Jews that settled especially in Lincoln, scholars like Mariko Miyazaki argue that this community more than others

eagerly embraced the canons like those of 1222 which limited interactions between Christians and Jews (31).

The study of Christian and Jewish relations in medieval England has shifted in recent years, though, to debate whether the anti-Semitic violence of the thirteenth and preceding centuries was as universally embraced as the narrative of medieval and current scholarly traditions has heretofore suggested. R. I. Moore, as a historian of persecution, though he recognizes the wealth and influence that some European Jewish communities gained, argues the “precariousness of such well being” (31). Even he warns, however, against interpreting “royal persecution” as evidence for “popular hostility” (42). Though the anti-Semitic cruelty of the Middle Ages cannot be denied, assumptions that the expulsion, for example, “was overwhelmingly supported by public opinion,” as Bernard Glassman remarks, are now under study (19). Robert Chazan speaks well to this new area of scholarly debate:

The well-established narrative of Jewish life in medieval Europe as a vale of tears, an unending sequence of majority (Christian) persecution and minority (Jewish) suffering, finds powerful support in many and diverse quarters. . . . Yet the realities of Jewish life in medieval Europe do not actually square with the narrative. (x)

This paper seeks to engage in these new inquiries regarding Christian-Jewish relations by providing a narrow examination of one medieval English community and its architectural center over the space of the thirteenth century.

Because of the period over which it was built, Lincoln Cathedral does reflect a narrative of Jewish-Christian conflict, but it also represents how complex these inter-faith relations were. To read the relation between Christian and Jew as solely hostile, even in such tumultuous environs as thirteenth-century Lincoln, is to read too closely in alignment with a medieval narrative purposefully constructed. Nina Rowe, in her extensive study of the figures *Ecclesia* and *Synagoga* on continental cathedrals, wisely elaborates on the construction of narrative achieved via architecture in these spaces of central import to the medieval community. *Ecclesia*, as the representative of the triumphant Church, and *Synagoga*, as the representative of defeated Judaism, became increasingly prominent figures in these cathedrals as church hierarchies sought to maintain fictions of Christian supremacy and control in the face

of growing populations of Jews who, in fact, were not defeated, but maintained their own vibrant communities (Rowe 1, 7-8, 29-30, 61). The present examination of Lincoln Cathedral goes further, even, to emphasize that not only were these narratives of control often fictive, but they were also not the only narratives told in the stones of cathedrals.

The narrative of antagonism, which emphasized a defeated and villainous Jewish population, was propagated through many textual sources—chronicles, saints' lives, and the canons and decrees of church and king. In the *Chronica Majora*, composed by Matthew of Paris, the Jews are often considered only in the context of one of their most oft-reported crimes—coin-clipping. Chronicling the year 1247, Matthew contextualizes this crime:

Moreover it was said and discovered that the coins were being circumcised by circumcised people and infidel Jews who, because of the heavy royal taxes, were reduced to begging. Other crimes, too, were said to have originated with them (15).

Not only are the Jews thus pictured as criminals, they are also described as physically and inescapably linked with these crimes as if their nature dictated it: circumcised coins created by circumcised people. In a more horrific account from the monastic annals of Burton, the text describes the murder of Little Hugh, a young boy reputedly the victim of blood libel in 1255, in terms purposefully meant to stir up revulsion against his supposed murderers—Jews recreating the crucifixion of Christ. The chronicler is careful to emphasize the marginalized condition of the Jews in regards to Christian community:

At last, the servants of the Devil trouble our Redeemer—whom their fathers had denied in the presence of Pilate, saying, “We have no king but Caesar”—and his members, that is to say, Christians, with horrible and execrable cruelty in order to anger the King of Glory; they pierced the tender body of the boy from the sole of the foot all the way to the crown of the head to such an extent that, his entire body covered with bleeding wounds, the inflicted wounds caused his body to resemble the skin of a hedgehog.³ (*Annales Monastici* 341)

Tales of crimes committed by Jews, whether they be linked to greed as a sort of ethnically centered vice or to blood libel as an indication of

the hate Jews still harbored against Christ and his followers, are numerous, and the ones just presented are hardly unique. One can probably assume that the effect of these texts on their writers, readers, and listeners may have been similar to the designed effect of the badges Jews were required to wear according to the 1253 Statute of Jewry. David A. Hinton argues that these badges were a method by which to create a symbol out of the Jewish population as a homogeneous whole, their physical appearance proscribed by a ruling Christian hierarchy (109). As Rowe argues concerning continental relations, the texts that appeared in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries reflected architectural concerns of the twelfth. Regarding Jews, this meant that texts and cathedrals emphasized a narrative of a defeated Old Testament, represented sometimes by the tablets of the Commandments and often by a more violent image of the *Synagoga* carrying a spear or banner against Christ or the Church (Rowe 1-2, 119). This model can be aptly applied to English cathedrals and texts which reflect a concerted effort to subjugate and control the image of the Jews.

However, reading against the grain of these texts, we may discern a reality at cross-purposes to the emotionally charged language of these narratives. Glimpses of a more peaceful relationship between Jews and Christians begin to appear—or at least evidence of some existent sympathy between the disparate faith groups. At times, even, one sees a community unified despite a text's efforts to impose divisions. Daniel Boyarin, in his work on the creation of late antique Christianity and Judaism in juxtaposition, asserts that any proposed binary between theologies or peoples must inevitably breed hybrids, people who fail to live by that binary, and that the narratives of these people must consequently be suppressed or subsumed in the anxiety to maintain an official binary or narrative (14). The result of such anxiety, though, is that those who wish to control often undermine themselves: "[T]hose very inspectors of religious customs, in their zeal to prevent any contraband from crossing the borders they sought to enforce by fiat, were themselves, the agents of illicit interchange of some of the most important contraband" (Boyarin 2). The texts discussed above confirm this argument. There are moments in these anti-Semitic texts in which we can recognize potential gaps wherein a reality at odds with intent is exposed. These moments are carefully circumscribed by the writers who attempt to force them into alignment with their intended narrative but are evident nonetheless.

In the *Chronica Majora*, for example, Matthew cannot but expose some of the harsh circumstances under which the Jews lived. He describes the motivation for the Jews to clip coin:

In these same days the lord king became dry with the thirst of avarice so that, laying aside all mercy, he ordered so much money to be extorted from the Jews that they appeared to be altogether and irremediably impoverished. (141)

This passage, if anything, seems to justify the actions of the Jews and applies to the king avaricious adjectives that one might expect to be applied to the Jews in this context. Immediately thereafter, however, Matthew is careful to remove any doubts from the reader's mind concerning his stance. He circumscribes the passage with what seems instruction to his audience on what to feel:

However, though miserable, they deserved no commiseration, for they were proved to have been often guilty of forgery, both of money and of seals. And if we are silent about their other crimes, we have decided to include one of them in this book, in order that their wickedness may be better known to more people. (141-42)

Though Matthew's logic seems at fault here—since surely the king's avarice could aptly be called to blame for all such currency-related crimes—his goal is clear. He is fairly explicit concerning his motivation to include this account of criminal activities: to insure the general recognition of the Jews as wicked. Why, then, include even a possible sympathetic explanation of the Jews' motivation for these supposed crimes? The *Chronica Majora* seems to run true to Boyarin's rule—it is unable to entirely repress a reality at odds with Matthew's intention.

The fact that a different reality of Christian-Jewish relations existed is apparent from a passage only slightly later in the chronicle. There were some Christians, unlike Matthew, who were, in fact, sympathetic to the Jews' plight. He describes Christians "who were grieving over and bemoaning the sufferings of the Jews" (143). Again, however, the chronicler circumscribes this report by mediating it through the perspective of a Jew, who, betraying his people, "reproached without fail" these Christians and "called the royal bailiffs lukewarm and effeminate" (143). Matthew must resort to a representative of a people he

clearly despises in order to bolster his own claims, claims that apparently are not fully convincing even to royal representatives. An odd tension is thus present in the text when the chronicler must use the voice of the repressed to condemn them. In his eagerness to criminalize the Jews, Matthew draws attention to a disjunction between his narrative and an everyday reality, a reality in which, as Rowe and numerous other scholars have established, Christians and Jews regularly interacted (Rowe 31).

Even when considering the incendiary tale of Little Hugh, the monastic annals cannot entirely conceal an attempt made to help those Jews arrested on suspicion of the murder. The text describes the attempts of the Dominicans to convert the captive Jews, one of the few conditions under which they might feasibly hope for release. The annals are quick to use a growing suspicion toward friars to undermine any sympathy or true compassion that might motivate such actions on the part of the Dominicans. The writer describes the rule of their behavior—"who, on account of love of the Crucifixion, had declared poverty, choosing a rule of strict life"—only to use it as a condemnation against them (*Annales Monastici* 346). The Dominicans are accused of operating based on greed, rather than on their vows, in hopes that they might profit from the Jews' release. The text conflates the sympathetic with the accused, the Dominicans taking on stereotypical attributes of the Jews. Due to this narrative move, the annals suffer from a tension similar to that of the *Chronica Majora* when Matthew uses a Jew to condemn the Jews, presenting a reality that does not even seem to reflect the offered facts, thus highlighting a lacuna in the narrative. Using what seems again to be circular logic, the chronicler explains that it is this event which caused the Dominicans to be generally reviled the length and breadth of England, consequently losing their respect and wealth. This account begs the question of whether such narratives help to create hate or are created by hate.

The figure of St. Hugh, bishop of Lincoln, as constructed by extant vitae, provides another opportunity to read for a reality discordant with a created narrative. Though Hugh was widely recognized as an advocate and protector of the Jewish population, his life is presented in vitae and hagiographical accounts as curiously absent from Jewish influence (Cohen 280). These narratives, crafted to create a saint or affirm saintliness, seem to function on an elision of Jews from accounts that can function only by their presence. In the prose vita composed by Adam of Eynsham in 1212, the narrative presents the riots that broke out when

Richard I took the throne as one of the primary events of Hugh's life. As Decima L. Douie and Dom Hugh Farmer, the translators of this vita, note, these riots were directed against Jews, and Hugh risked his own life during these conflicts to protect this beleaguered section of the community (x1). The *Historia rerum Anglicarum* explains how the inhabitants of Lincoln, acting on the model of neighboring Stamford, took this moment of transition as an opportunity to attack members of their own community: "But the men of Lincoln, hearing what had been done concerning the Jews [in Stamford], found an opportunity, and with like spirits, considered acting against them, and gathering in a crowd, broke out against the Jews in a sudden riot" (Parvus 19). Adam, however, describes Hugh's actions in the riot without reference to the specific identity of those whom Hugh defends:

First, therefore, I must briefly recount how, in order to restrain the violence of angry men, [Hugh] bravely and intrepidly often advanced unarmed into the midst of an armed band, and stood calm, undaunted and bareheaded among the naked brandished swords and clenched fists, first in the cathedral at Lincoln, then in Holland and finally at Northampton. (2: 16-17)

The only participants identified in the riot are those attacking:

His magnificent courage and the protection of his guardian angels, which armed him with divine might, caused the enraged clerks and laymen at Lincoln, the knights and squires at Holland, and the burgesses at Northampton to give way out of shame. (2: 16)

Adam describes the station of the rioters with exactitude, differentiating them based on location, without providing any description whatsoever of those being attacked by these rioters. Though Hugh calming a riot might carry some merit on its own, surely some readers of this vita, composed very shortly after the bishop's death, would have recognized the full circumstances of this conflict. Given this probability, the absence of the Jews in this narrative is even more noticeable—and more noteworthy. Such an elision must surely be purposeful. Adam crafts a narrative to support the saintliness of Hugh and, for him, this purpose is better served by not mentioning the bishop's relation with the Jews in his community.

This presentation, of course, is blatantly at odds with the reality of the situation and draws attention to its own narrative shortcomings.

The *vita* composed two years later, in 1214, by Gerald of Wales goes further to align Hugh with Christian sympathies in the face of violence against Jews, explicitly referencing the presence of the Jews in order to marginalize them. Rather than chronicling the riots themselves, Gerald describes only the aftermath. He narrates Hugh's journey to the assembly of the new king, during which the bishop encounters a corpse on the road. Gerald relates Hugh's reaction in such a way as to imply anti-Semitic sentiment:

He inquired immediately whether the dead man was a Jew or a Christian, because of the massacre of the Jews the day before. When he heard it was a Christian, he dismounted at once with his men and had the corpse sewn up in a new cloth that he ordered to be purchased. (25)

In this account, there is no mention of Hugh's defense of the Jews during the riots, and the text seems to imply—by describing the bishop's interest in the *Christian* corpse—that Hugh would have reacted differently and with less sympathy to a Jewish corpse. Christian burial practice aside, such a carefully circumscribed account of the riots is again disorienting in regards to the facts as we know them. Indeed, the text itself draws attention to the missing information by referencing the gratitude of the Jewish community towards Hugh, but without providing a reason for said gratitude. For despite the negative representations throughout the text, Adam of Eynsham's *vita* must at least allow a positive depiction of the relation between Hugh and the Jews in the Lincoln community in order to emphasize the saintliness of his subject at his death:

Even the Jews came out, weeping to render him what homage they could, mourning and lamenting him aloud as the faithful servant of the one God. Their behavior towards the man of God made us realize that the prophecy 'The Lord has caused all nations to bless him' had in his case been fulfilled. (2: 228)

Thus, at the end of the narrative, the Jews have escaped from the margins, highlighting an absence in the rest of the text: an explanation and a foundation for their affection for this Christian bishop. The *vita* attempts to circumscribe this passage by emphasizing its anomalous

nature, but this can only serve to make a careful reader question the incident more.

The presence of such problematic texts, many of which specifically address the medieval Lincoln community with its large Jewish population, requires us, then, to consider additional factors that can help provide a better and clearer picture of this inter-faith city. Following the example of architectural historians like Nina Rowe, who have opened up the physical spaces of communities as texts, it seems profitable to examine the presence of Lincoln Cathedral as a commentary on these biased accounts, especially as its reconstruction was guided by St. Hugh. The space of Lincoln Cathedral is, in many ways, dominated by anti-Semitic figures and memorials, but it also reflects Jewish influences. Accessed by a broader public and in a more tactile way, and contextualized as it was by a living breathing community, Lincoln Cathedral reads as a space where Jews are not so ably circumscribed or marginalized, though the attempt is made. Thus, in a space of Christian worship, which would seem to represent a solid boundary against the commingling nature of Jewish-Christian relations in the community, we find our most fluid text.

There is much recent scholarship that points to the collaboration between Jewish and Christian communities to construct and furnish cathedrals. Joseph Shatzmiller explains that churches often commissioned or sought advice from Jewish craftsmen “in their quest to embellish their sacred spaces” (141). He points, for a specific example, to an altar table commissioned by Prince Edward, the very man who would later effect the 1290 expulsion (152). Additionally, in her study on the cathedral at Bourges, Margaret Jennings argues that the edifice becomes a testimony to peaceful Jewish and Christian interaction (205). Such examples are indicative, perhaps, of the twelfth century, when, as Sara Lipton argues, typological interpretation became the mode, and the role of Jews in the narrative of Christian salvation was recognized and at least partially embraced (46). Willehad Paul Eckert remarks on just such a textual moment when he reflects on the *Synagoga* that appears in one of the visions of Hildegard of Bingen. This figure, though a representation of the Jewish faith, has an uplifted head, not beaten down as can be found in some other representations (302). The image reflects a tolerance, if a reluctant or precarious one, for the Christian toward her Jewish counterpart (310).

Regarding Lincoln Cathedral as a similarly productive space by which to read medieval Jewish-Christian relations is not an entirely

foreign concept in non-academic spheres. The British organizations English Heritage and SpiroArk jointly sponsor a website, *jtrails.org*, which provides information to interested sightseers tracing Jewish culture and historiography across the country. The site describes the Lincoln minster as proof that “there was much more to the relationship of Cathedral and Jews than simple hostility.”⁴ A modern tourist, of course, does not experience the cathedral in the same way as medieval worshipers, one reason being that the medieval stained glass, though largely preserved from Hugh’s reconstruction, is rarely located in its original setting. Despite relocations, however, the images preserved in the glass from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries show a distinct interest in Jewish-Christian relations. The memorials and stone figures and structures of the cathedral in place by the end of the thirteenth century also show a preoccupation with the relationship between Old and New Testament, Jew and Christian. From the western front which contains remnants of Romanesque friezes depicting Jewish mythology to the eastern Angel’s Choir where the remains of St. Hugh are interred, the entire path of the worshiper is marked with structural reminders of the composition of the Lincoln community, prior to the expulsion of the Jews in 1290.

To consider how medieval pilgrims would have experienced this space, and whether they would be able to read the narrative of complex relationships in the Lincoln community as they progressed through the space, we must first briefly dwell on the nature of lay interaction with both relics and cathedrals. Most scholars recognize that a cathedral was often read much like a text. Robert A. Scott describes the cathedral as a “master narrative” deliberately created (154, 233). In studies on late medieval England that provide insight into the visual and object culture of earlier centuries, Sarah Stanbury and Robyn Malo comment on the narrative also perpetuated by the relic and by the performances of clergy in the space of the church or cathedral. Stanbury identifies the church as the “premier vehicle of the medieval media” (5). The consumption of such media, though, especially relics, was not unmediated, Malo argues (12). Relics were “sites of contested meanings,” their interpretation governed by “systems of power and discourse” (13). Therefore what a relic or shrine or piece of architecture indicated was not always immediately obvious or stable, requiring thought and activity on the part of the pilgrim to construct a narrative.

Ben Nilson, in his intensive study of shrines, provides some concrete information regarding the manner in which pilgrims at Lincoln

Cathedral may have interacted with and created narratives from that specific space. In most cathedrals, pilgrims would have encountered the nave first, entering from the west doors or, in some instances, through the aisles (93-94). As such, they accessed lesser shrines first (94). The pathway by which the pilgrim approached larger shrines, often constructed at the eastern end of the cathedral, was restrictive and may have been intersected with screens (94). This method of progress must naturally have contributed to a sense of narrative as the pilgrims consciously embraced the process of moving from holy to more holy. Guides were sometimes provided, so an explicit narrative would have been provided to the pilgrims as well (95-96).

In its reconstruction over the twelfth century, Lincoln cathedral had been converted into an ambulatory design, deliberately crafted to enhance the experience of visiting the shrines (76). The cathedral was constructed to encourage lay interaction with the shrines and architecture, an interaction that must surely have inspired a reflection on Jewish-Christian relations, given the specific architectural elements of Lincoln minster. Perhaps, even, with the architectural subordination of all else to the shrine of St. Hugh, the primary draw for pilgrims to Lincoln, the laity would have recognized a conflict between opposing narratives of libel, represented by the shrine of little Hugh, and charity, represented by St. Hugh, in the relations of the Lincoln community (63, 158). Given this possibility, other architectural elements that will be outlined below may have easily been adopted into this complicated narrative.

The friezes on the western front, which would have served as the main entrance before the construction of the Judgment porch to the south, finished in the late thirteenth century, depict extra-canonical traditions emphasizing the importance of the Old Testament to New Testament narratives. To the north of the doors is presented The Harrowing of Hell and the Bosom of Abraham, both images representing the grace of God in preserving those who followed God before the first coming of Jesus. To the south of the doors is represented the Jewish myth that Adam and Eve were given the gift of seeds of perfume to till after their expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Zarnecki 45). Friezes of the Flood, portraying giants as are present in Jewish traditions, wrap around the corner of the original Romanesque wall, but are now enclosed within the Ringer's Chapel. Images to the north follow the same religious impulse represented by the *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures flanking the Judgment Porch. As Rowe explains, these figures rely on a Catholic typology in which the New Testament ultimately supplants the Old, thus categorizing

the Old Testament as inferior but necessary (2, 6). In these friezes, patriarchal figures are saved, but through the grace of Jesus Christ. Some have waited in hell for such a rescue, implying an inequality with post-New Testament believers. These friezes also accompany an array of statuary kings over the door, linking this circumscription with royal authority—again similarly to the way in which Rowe argues that the *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures are operating in the Reims cathedral (2).



Fig. 1: *Synagoga et Ecclesia*, Galilee Porch.⁵

The *Synagoga* and *Ecclesia* figures of Lincoln Cathedral function in much the same way as the friezes to greet worshipers, channeling them to the shrines and choirs within. Framing the doors, these two figures also direct the eye to a central statue of Mary and a frieze of Jesus above the doors. As Marian cults often arose in response to Jewish persecution, this proximity between the figure of the defeated synagogue and a centralized Mary figure provides some interesting connections to the stained glass within the cathedral (Abulafia 171). Of particular interest in this consideration is a panel of stained glass, most likely originally situated in the north transept or in the north of the Angel's Choir, which depicts instances of evil Jews and Marian rescue (Morgan 30). The window portrays the legend of the Jewish wizard who leads Theophilus to meet the Devil and also the story of a boy being murdered by his father for converting to Christianity only to be saved by Mary at the last moment. In addition to emphasizing the Jews' propensity for wickedness and apparently natural associations with the Devil, the window also appears

to reference the horror of blood libel, which would have been of particular significance to the Lincoln community because of the famed death of little Hugh, to whom a shrine was dedicated in the south aisle of the Cathedral.

The two main entrances to the Cathedral, then, support a narrative regarding Jews much like that found in the vitae and chronicles above. However, again, as in those texts, Jewish cultural influence refuses to remain entirely marginalized. The friezes depicting the gift of perfume and the giants present at the Flood fail to fit neatly within the narrative of subjugation. Their prominent presence, even if dating earlier than the Judgment Porch, alters the perception of the cathedral's entire construction. In her attempt to locate a golden age of Jewish-Christian relations, Jennings notes Jewish architectural elements included in twelfth-century cathedrals in continental Europe. In the frescoes of the nave vault at Saint Savin sur Gartemps, these giants of the flood are also pictured—Og and Sihon drawn from the midrashic text, *Pirke of Rabbi Eleazar* (2). Given that these images are harder to read into a narrative of supplantation by the New Testament, these friezes reflect back on their counterparts across the doors—asking the viewer not to read those included in Abraham's bosom as cursed, but as blessed. The interior of the Cathedral, if anything, is even more difficult to frame as a homogeneous narrative, though since largely reconstructed in the thirteenth century, the homages to anti-Semitism are predictably more virulent. Even so, in the face of increased tensions, the cathedral resists official narratization—providing a more complex presentation of Jewish-Christian relations than the written texts already discussed.

The route most likely taken by worshipers through the cathedral in the late thirteenth century, proceeding from the nave or more probably from the Judgment Porch since it was constructed at the same time as the major shrines were dedicated, would most likely have been to travel via the south aisle, past St. Hugh's Choir, to reach the Angel's Choir. This path, after 1290, would have taken visitors past the shrine dedicated to Little Hugh, situated in the middle of the south aisle, and towards the shrine of St. Hugh. Interred in the Angel's Choir as well were the viscera of Eleanor of Castile. The placement of these three most noteworthy memorials in the cathedral creates a narrative that in many ways resembles the written texts discussed above. The shrine to St. Hugh is circumscribed both in its approach and its proximate structures. The cult surrounding Little Hugh would make this first-encountered shrine a potentially powerful monument to anti-Semitism—especially as it was

constructed on the orders of Edward I. Its power, however, must be questioned since, as Bale writes, cults such as these did not necessarily reflect a popular devotion but were often instead the result of financial maneuvers, since pilgrims helped to support local economies (“Fictions of Judaism” 131). Though he allows that Lincoln may have been an exception, the larger context Bale provides moderates the power such a shrine might have. If anything, Bale notes that the shrine might circumscribe the grave of Robert Grossteste, bishop between 1235 and 1253, and his ambiguous reputation regarding the Jewish population of Lincoln, forcing the perception of this bishop as anti-Semitic (140).



Fig. 2: Remnants of the shrine to Little Hugh in the south aisle

The interred viscera of Queen Eleanor, labeled “an enemy of medieval Anglo-Jews” by *Jtrails*, in the Angel’s Choir would emphasize again the anti-Semitic stance of some of Lincoln Cathedral’s later supporters, as well as the weighty influence Edward I had concerning this cathedral. However, both shrines, and Edward’s role in their construction, cannot but remind the pilgrim of an absence. Little Hugh’s shrine was dedicated in the same year as the Jews were expelled, but some forty years after the supposed blood libel itself. The timing, then, of the construction of this shrine is significant. As Bale says, this shrine “reified the Jews in their polemical role, as the child-murderers of the past” (*Jew in the Medieval Book* 138). The shrine, in fact, serves as a political maneuver, supporting Edward I’s recent decree expelling the

Jews. In reminding the viewer of the Jews' absence, however, one cannot but wonder whether some viewers regarded the expulsion with less than favor. Reading in the gaps of the chronicles and vitae, we can see that some Christians did, in fact, view their Jewish neighbors not with hate, but with sympathy for their suffering. In commemorating an absence, a shrine such as that of Little Hugh's cannot entirely control what image or memory will be substituted—even if it attempts to create a direct link between Jews and murder.

Given its surroundings, then, the shrine to St. Hugh, following so closely after the shrine to Little Hugh, would seemingly lose some or all of the philo-Semitic power it might have held. However, the architectural space again resists such easy circumscription. The shrine, meant to contain the head of St. Hugh, would, when fully intact, have been significantly grander than either the shrine to Little Hugh or the tomb containing the queen's viscera. The pedestal is all that remains today, but that alone is an imposing testament to the original shrine (Bond 76, 90). It ascends vertically, drawing the eye upwards, and the stained glass that filters light into the Angel's Choir, though it contains the images of



Fig. 3: Angel Choir, with the pedestal of St. Hugh's head shrine (l) and the tomb for Queen Eleanor's viscera (r).

Theophilus and the Marian rescue, also contains a moving image of St. Hugh's funeral procession eighty years before the construction of the choir. This frame of glass, dating to the early thirteenth century, retains in its illustration some feel of that closing image in Adam of Eynsham's *vita*, wherein the death of the bishop united Jew and Christian in common sentiment. Though we cannot attribute such intention to the artisan with any surety, the pane also recalls the western frieze in which the gift of perfume is given to Adam and Eve. The hand of God descends from the heavens and lingers in blessing over the covered corpse, supported by three kings and three archbishops (*Lincoln Cathedral Stained Glass*). Whether this stained glass window was initially placed in the north aisle or transept or somewhat closer in the choir itself, the pilgrim would encounter it in combination with the anti-Semitic images, perhaps upon leaving the shrines.

Thus, even though St. Hugh's shrine is framed by newer memorials to anti-Semitism, it stands at the heart and core of the Angel's Choir, in sight of the choir planned and constructed by the bishop himself, St. Hugh's Choir. This placement does not therefore, of necessity, subjugate the shrine to all that surrounds it, but instead requires the pilgrim or worshiper to consider at the last the significance or sanctity of this bishop's life. So, moving from one Hugh to another, the narrative of the cathedral is far from simple, and it represents, if not the sentiments of pilgrims who may have lost access or never had access to the narrative surrounding St. Hugh himself, at least a testament to the complexity of Christian-Jewish relations despite attempts to constrain the stones themselves into an official narrative. Architectural spaces like Lincoln Cathedral and textual spaces like the *vitae* of St. Hugh of Avalon construct narratives that both betray and suppress an alternate reality than that of the authorial intention—whether those authors be chroniclers or architects. Since the claim can also be reasonably made that Aaron of Lincoln or other wealthy Jewish financiers helped provide the funds to construct the cathedral—this support, of course, predating the later shrines—we must, in all reality, consider Jews to be partial authors of this narrative as well, in a way medieval Christian-written texts could not be (Treasure 1; Glick 213). As such, this physical space is a text with valuable insight into medieval Jewish-Christian relations that cannot be ignored.

Notes

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¹ The official Lincoln Cathedral pamphlet outlining the narrative of construction (cited below under *Lincoln Cathedral from 1072*) uses this quotation to publicize the noteworthiness of their minster. The quotation demonstrates the investment of the community in this architectural structure and highlights the historical weightiness attributed to this edifice.

² Remnants of the Romanesque architecture remain along the western façade over the doors.

³ Tandem ministri diaboli ut Regem gloriae irritarent, nostrum Redemptorem quem patres eorum ante faciem Pilati negaverunt, dicendo *Non habemus regem nisi Caesarem*, et ejus membra, id est Christianos, detestanda et horrenda crudelitate confunderent, dicti pueruli corpus tenerrimum a planta pedis usque ad verticem minutis aculeis et acutis in tantum pupugerunt, ut toto corpore cruentato vulneribus, vulnera inflicta ipsius corpus pelli hericii similarent. [Translation mine.]

⁴ The sponsors of *jtrails.org* have also worked hand in hand with Lincoln Cathedral to address problematic areas like the shrine of little Hugh, providing an educational plaque regarding the prejudicial assumptions of blood libel in an attempt to highlight the true nature of Jewish-Christian relations in medieval England. The website provides a tour guide of sorts to numerous communities in England. For Lincoln, the site explores spaces of interest both in the cathedral (many of which spaces are addressed in this article) and in the surrounding streets.

⁵ All photographs have been taken by the author and are used with permission from Lincoln Cathedral. Many of the statues are missing their heads due to the iconoclasm of the English Reformation.

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